

Figure 6. Hasty Defense.

- Gunners will start gathering camouflage and overhead cover.

- A workable rotation will then be instituted between digging, gathering camouflage, cleaning weapons, and filling sand bags.

Positions: If company is to establish a deliberate defense, gun systems will remain in base plate mode and will be oriented in direction of fire. Mortar posi-

tions will be approximately 25 meters apart in width and depth (Figure 5). Terrain will dictate positions.

Each position will be dug in three stages: mortar pit, squad room, and ammunition storage.

- Pit will be 3 M16 lengths wide, depth 1 M16 length (from butt plate to front sight post).

- Squad room will be 1½ M16s wide,

2½ M16s long, and at least 1½ M16s deep. If more than 4 men are to be at one mortar pit, another squad room must be constructed.

HASTY DEFENSE

Defensive Fighting Position: Once the company moves to the objective or into the defense, the section sergeant and CO, XO, or FSO determine the primary positions for mortar section (Figure 6). The mortars will be set up according to defense SOP. When both gun systems are in the indirect mode and communications are established, hasty fighting positions will be dug according to company SOP. Since the mortars will normally be inside the company defensive perimeter, it is very important to know locations of CP, FSO, CO trains, and platoon individual fighting positions.

Each mortar gun crew will establish a 360-degree defense around its system. Hasty positions will be between 5 and 10 meters from the gun system, and direction of fire for the M16 will be established by section sergeant or ranking man.

Antiarmor Fire Distribution

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Regardless of their specific unit missions, antiarmor leaders everywhere have the same basic problems: Their mission usually requires them to occupy hasty battle positions with little time to mark trigger lines or target reference points. Because our doctrine calls for antiarmor vehicle positions to be 300-500 meters apart, communication is difficult at best. In addition, there is usually no time to cache rounds to supplement the vehicles' limited basic load, so it becomes even more important not to waste rounds on multiple engagements of a single target.

For these reasons, a good direct fire distribution SOP is critical to the success of an antiarmor mission.

The fire distribution techniques offered here were refined from the "pattern fire" control method introduced in TC 7-24 and were successfully demonstrated during an NTC rotation and numerous local exercises. They were developed for a HMMWV TOW platoon (motorized) consisting of five vehicles, each armed with the TOW-2 system and carrying a basic load of six missiles. The five vehicles were organized into two sections and

a command vehicle, with the platoon sergeant as senior section leader.

Nevertheless, the techniques can be readily adapted to any unit that has an antiarmor mission and can help other antiarmor leaders develop their own SOPs.

First, control measures must be established so that everyone—friend and foe alike—can be easily identified. Each platoon vehicle is identified by bumper number and platoon color: First platoon is red; second platoon is white; third platoon is blue; fourth platoon is green; and

headquarters platoon is black. Thus, the first platoon's vehicles are Red 1 through Red 5, with the command vehicle being Red 1.

Targets are identified by counting from

the direction of movement (that is, the lead target in the platoon sector is number 1)

1) If the opposing force (OPFOR) unit is advancing on line, then the targets are counted from left to right (Figure 1). This

enables the platoon members to readily identify targets to each other; for example, "Red 3 this is Red 2, left of TRP 2; you take 5, I've got 4." This transmission says who will do the shooting, gives Red 3 a reference point to help him spot his portion of the target array, and assigns targets to keep the platoon from expending two missiles on one kill.

Once target identification SOPs are in place in a unit, a set of basic plays, or engagement techniques, can be established. These are selected on the basis of the terrain and are designated in the fire command. The basic engagement techniques are frontal fire, cross fire, and depth fire.

The platoon leader selects the frontal fire technique when the OPFOR's avenue of approach is non-restrictive and the platoon is on a single terrain feature, making hide or hull defilade positions necessary (Figure 2). The platoon engages targets to its front. The rightmost section engages the targets to the far right, with the section leader killing the one farthest to the right and his wingman killing the next one. The leftmost section does the same thing on the left. Then the sections work their way toward the center.

The gunner on the command vehicle fires at priority targets that are designated by the commander in his operational matrix and plugs gaps in the platoon's fire pattern. This lessens the possibility of overlapping fires, protects against flank movements, and makes use of mutual support in the final engagements.

Another technique the platoon leader may select is cross fire. The cross fire technique is selected when the enemy's avenue of approach is moderately restrictive, and when the terrain gives the sections frontal cover yet allows them to fire across each other's front (Figure 3). In this technique, the rightmost section engages the targets farthest to the left, with the section leader killing the one on the extreme left and his wingman killing the next one toward the center. The leftmost section does the same thing on the right.

In the more restrictive terrain associated with cross fire, the command vehicle is positioned so that the platoon leader can observe decision points identified by the battalion S-2, the commander's concept, or the platoon leader's own terrain

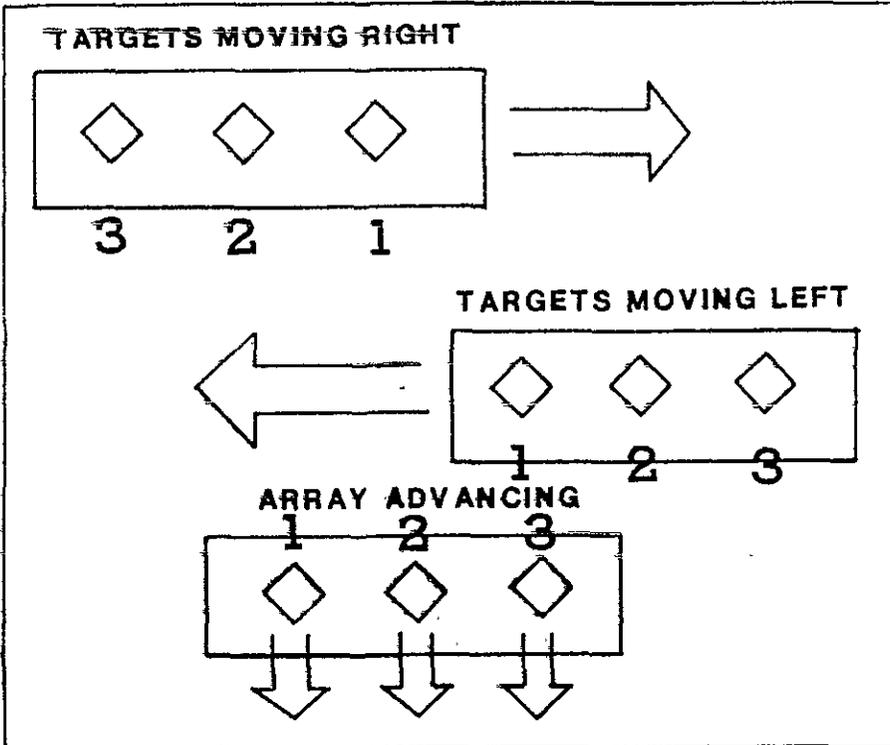


Figure 1. Counting targets.

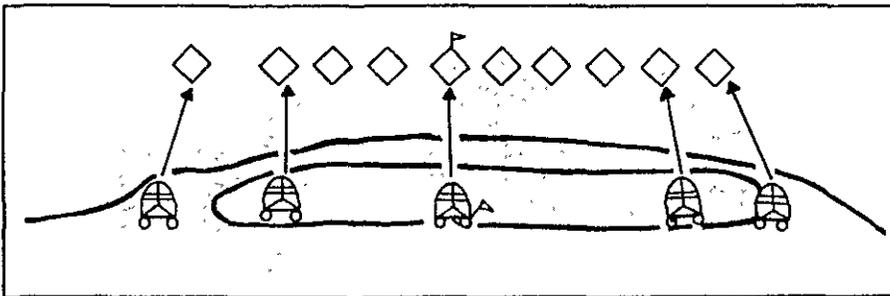


Figure 2. Frontal fire.

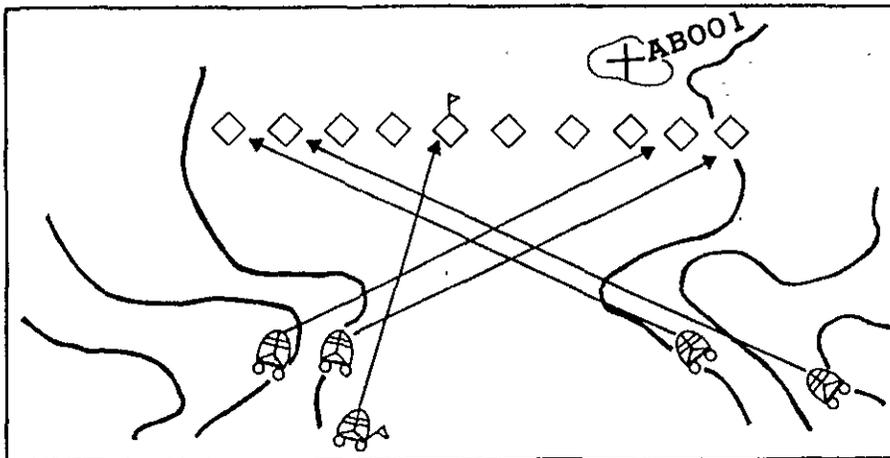


Figure 3. Cross fire.

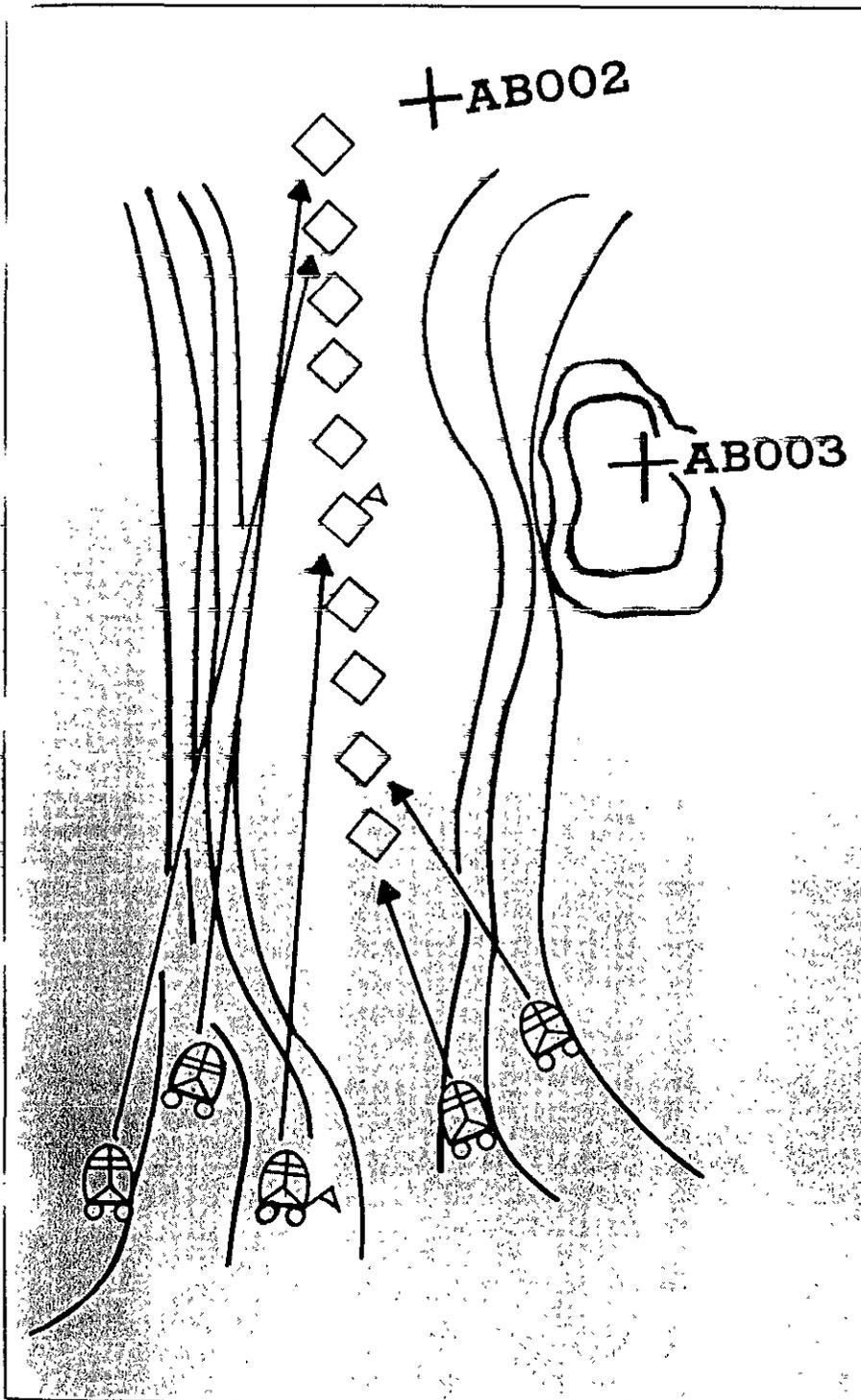


Figure 4. Depth fire.

analysis. From that position the platoon leader must be able to observe and coordinate all fires into his sector, especially indirect fires. The gunner on the command vehicle engages priority targets and fills in gaps in the platoon fire pattern. This technique provides protection against direct fire, masks backblast, produces flank shots, and improves mutual

support in the final engagements.

The platoon leader may also select the depth fire technique (Figure 4). This is most effective when the OPFOR's avenue of approach is very restricted. A narrow pass or a bridge that forces the OPFOR unit into a column formation is ideal. The most experienced section engages the targets farthest to the rear that

are within range in the platoon sector. The other section engages the lead targets. Once again, the sections work their fires toward the middle, and the gunner on the command vehicle shoots at specified targets and plugs gaps in the platoon's fire pattern.

Although these techniques are simple and sound, they do not solve all of the problems facing an antiarmor leader. Like a quarterback, a good platoon leader must be flexible. The three basic plays—frontal fire, cross fire, and depth fire—are made to be modified on the field. In fact, a platoon may use several of them at the same time. If the terrain is compartmentalized, for example, one section may use frontal fire while another uses cross fire. Or an OPFOR array may dictate that one section use depth fire. Casualties can be wargamed in advance to allow for the reassignment of missions within the fire pattern. The control measures can also be adapted to any chain of command or color and number scheme, so long as it remains possible to identify and control the attached units.

Whichever techniques are used, direct fire—like a running play on the football field—is only part of the game plan. A thorough intelligence preparation of the battlefield that identifies avenues of approach and decision points forms the basis for positioning from the battalion engagement area down to the individual gun.

Detailed ground coordination provides the infantry support necessary for defending the platoon against any opposing forces that may be dedicated to locating and destroying the TOW systems before the engagement.

Finally, coordinated TOW, Dragon, MK19 automatic grenade, and heavy machinegun fires across a man-made or natural obstacle to slow the rate of closure—along with timely, accurate, and integrated fire support and air missions against follow-up echelons—can create a catastrophic engagement area.

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